

Message Text

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FOR CA AND AF/EX FROM AMBASSADOR SMITH

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CGEN, OGEN, GH
SUBJECT: CONSULAR SECTION STAFFING

1. CONTINUOUS HEAVY INCREASES IN THE EMBASSY CONSULAR SECTION'S WORKLOAD NECESSITATE THE PRIORITY ASSIGNMENT OF A SECOND CONSULAR OFFICER AND THE HIRING OF A THIRD FULL-TIME FSL TO FILL THE POSITIONS CURRENTLY BUDGETED FOR FY 1979.

2. THE ABOVE POSITIONS WERE BUDGETED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO PERMIT THE SECTION TO MEET THE DEMANDS PLACED UPON IT BY THE INCREASES IN VISA WORKLOAD IN FY 1977. THE NEED FOR THEM IS CURRENTLY EVEN GREATER AS THE NUMBER OF GHANAIS APPLYING FOR BOTH IVS AND NIVS HAS CONTINUED TO GROW AT A RAPID RATE. APPLICATIONS FOR IVS AND NIVS FOR THE FIRST ELEVEN MONTHS OF FY 1978 WERE 225 AND 7581 RESPECTIVELY, REPRESENTING 96 PERCENT AND 93 PERCENT INCREASES OVER THE SIMILAR PERIOD OF FY 1976. AS THE WORKLOAD HAS INCREASED, THE EMBASSY'S ABILITY TO MEET IT HAS DECREASED WITH THE ELIMINATION OF A JOT POSITION FORMERLY USED TO SUPPORT THE CONSULAR SECTION DURING PEAK RUSH PERIODS.

3. THE EFFECT OF THESE RECENT INCREASES IN VISA APPLICATIONS ON THE CONSULAR SECTION HAS BEEN A LOSS OF EFFICIENCY, A DROP IN STAFF MORALE, A DANGER OF CONSULAR BROWNOUT FOR
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THE SECTION'S ONLY OFFICER, AND, PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, A REDUCTION IN THE EMBASSY'S ABILITY TO BOTH HANDLE THE VISA WORKLOAD AND PROVIDE ADEQUATE ROUTINE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES FOR AMERICAN CITIZENS.

4. THE ARRIVAL OF A SECOND OFFICER AND HIRING OF A THIRD FULL-TIME FSL WOULD PERMIT THE EMBASSY TO CORRECT THE

PROBLEMS LISTED ABOVE AND TO TAKE URGENTLY NEEDED STEPS TO IMPROVE THE SECTION'S PERFORMANCE. PRIMARILY, THE SECTION WOULD BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH AN AMERICAN CITIZEN SUB-SECTION, SET UP AN ACTIVE FRAUD INVESTIGATION UNIT, (AS RECOMMENDED BY THE INSPECTORS), HAVE ITS CHIEF RETURN TO BEING A FULL CONTRIBUTING MEMBER TO THE COUNTRY TEAM, AND RE-ESTABLISH AN ABILITY TO BOTH HANDLE THE VISA WORKLOAD AND PROVIDE SERVICES TO AMERICAN CITIZENS.

5. THE EMBASSY IS FULL AWARE OF THE STAFFING CONSTRAINTS FACED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND OF THE CURRENT SHORTAGE OF TRAINED CONSULAR OFFICERS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE HEAVY DEMANDS UPON ACCRA'S CONSULAR SECTION AND THE REDUCED ABILITY OF OTHER SECTIONS OF THE EMBASSY TO ASSIST THE CONSULAR SECTION MUST BE SEEN AS REQUIRING THE RAPID ASSIGNMENT OF A SECOND OFFICER AND THE HIRING OF A THIRD FULL-TIME FSL. THE CURRENT INCREASES IN VISA APPLICATIONS SHOW NO SIGNS OF ABATING, AND WITHOUT THESE POSITIONS THE EMBASSY WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY IN MEETING ITS STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS TO GHANAIANS AND AMERICANS ALIKE. SMITH

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